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BOOK REVIEWS

THE LIFE OF JAMES McNEIL WHISTLER, BY ELIZABETH R. and JOSEPH PENNELL. New and revised edition. Illustrated. J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, Publishers. Price \$3.50 net.

All interested in the work of Whistler will welcome this revised edition of his life, which is, to all intents and purposes, a new one, as much new material has recently fallen into the hands of the authors, and many of the illustrations in earlier editions have been superseded by those now reproduced for the first time.

Whistler's would-be biographers were legion. In 1896 he wrote "Determined that no mendacious scamp shall tell the foolish truths about me, I now proceed to take the wind out of such, by furnishing, myself, the fiction of my own biography." But the task was too great, and in 1900 he begged his friends, the Pennells, to undertake it. Thereafter, he did all in his power to assist them. "He spent evening after evening with us, coming so frequently that he once said, 'Well, you know, you will feel about me as I did in the old days about the man I could never ask to dinner because he was always there!'" These evenings were not wasted. Bit by bit he related his entire life, and this recital has illuminated many of its otherwise incomprehensible passages.

Apart from this, their long and intimate friendship has enabled the Pennells to draw a true and sympathetic portrait of both man and painter. No one can read this record of Whistler's every-day life and not feel drawn to the brave, gay "Butterfly" under whose whimsical exterior was hidden a great heart and a great genius. There is a curious resemblance between his character, as here revealed, and that of Mark Twain. Had he remained among his own people in America, as did the latter, would he have been less misunderstood than by the English, who were so often shocked by his gay joking and for whom he always remained a puzzle?

"His vivacity of gesture, his Ameri-

can accent, his gaiety, his sense of honor, his quick resentment of an insult, were foreign, and therefore, to be suspected, and his personality increased the suspicion with which his art was regarded. * * * His art, in its aims and methods, was different from theirs. Naturally, he was regarded as *different*—a *poseur*. He was so isolated that nothing has been more difficult for the historian of modern art than to place, to classify, him."

But those who love his pictures need no classification of him as an artist. What they desire is exactly what the Pennells have given—a lovable picture of the man as he was—not without faults, for he was very human, but his faults were understood by these friends who revered him as the greatest artist and most striking personality of the 19th century.

ANNUAL OF THE SOCIETY OF ILLUSTRATORS, 1911. With an introduction by ROYAL CORTISSOZ. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. Publishers. Price \$3.00 net.

This is a book of pictures prefaced by an excellent and engaging essay on the art of illustration and its development in America. There are eighty or more full-page illustrations, admirably printed, which represent the work of about as many well-known American illustrators, members of the Society of Illustrators, whose president is Charles Dana Gibson. The publication of this volume marks the tenth year of the existence of this society, and is intended as the first of a series, the object of which will be to make yearly record of the accomplishment of the members and at the same time show the progress of the school. Each member has the privilege of sending in one drawing of his own choice, preferably unpublished, regarding the character of which no limitations whatsoever are set. The 1911 Annual is retrospective beyond the boundary of the year, which, being the first of the series, is entirely appropriate. The first illustration given is an

excellent drawing by E. A. Abbey from "She Stoops to Conquer," and works by Robert Blum, Louis Loeb and other distinguished deceased members are included. But the average of merit is not higher than may be yearly maintained, for in the field of illustration very excellent work is being done and will almost certainly continue to be done. Brought together in this way the art of the illustrator is seen to have a dignity and importance with which it is not always credited. Double good should therefore come from this publication; on the part of the public it should engender increased appreciation and on the part of the illustrators a greater respect for and satisfaction in their work, which is something finer and better than mere "pot boiling," as it is sometimes slightly designated. Right truly Mr. Cortisoz has said, "If the art of illustration can claim, in America, to possess one particular virtue, it is the virtue of being alive. * * * Our illustrations have plenty of 'go,' they have an abundance of character, of human interest, of movement. * * * The talent behind them is strengthened above all by sympathy for current interests and conditions."

THE WIDTH AND ARRANGEMENT OF STREETS. A STUDY IN TOWN PLANNING, BY CHARLES MULFORD ROBINSON, Author of The Improvement of Towns and Cities, Modern Civic Art and the Call of the City. The Engineering News Publishing Company, New York, Publishers. Price \$2.00 net.

The kind reception accorded the general thesis of this volume when it was offered at the great Town Planning Conference in London, a little more than a year ago, to which the author was a special delegate from the United States, led to its amplification and publication in its present form. Mr. Robinson has given years of study to the subject and has had practical experience in planning and replanning numerous small cities and towns in various parts of this country. In successive chapters such

vital topics as "Street Widths and Land Values," "How to Lessen the Cost of Wide Streets," "The Development of High Class Minor Streets," etc., are dealt with. Practical problems are frankly presented, but not definitely solved, the author preferring to suggest rather than dictate methods and practice. Indeed it is from the esthetic standpoint in its relation to the community and the individual that he has regarded the subject, urging upon his readers that "the first principle of town planning is consideration for the rights of others," and that the inalienable right of all is beauty.

THE AMERICAN ART ANNUAL, VOLUME IX, FLORENCE N. LEVY, Editor. Published by the American Art Annual, Incorporated, New York. Price \$5.00.

The American Art Annual has become indispensable as a directory and reference book of art activities in the United States, and the appearance of a new volume is not only welcome as an additional source of information, but as a token of history made, of advance in the development of art in America.

The fact is that history is made so rapidly in this day that it is hard to keep abreast of progress. The directory of artists in the United States has become so lengthy that it demands a volume to itself, and the list of art societies now alone occupies over two hundred pages.

The special features of Volume IX are: a list of the important mural paintings in the United States compiled through the co-operation of the Mural Painters and arranged most conveniently by cities alphabetically; an article on Paintings, Prints and Art Objects as Investments, which gives a record of prices paid during recent years not heretofore been brought together, and a complete list of all the members of the National Academy of Design since its organization in 1826, compiled from the Academy's official register. Seventy-three illustrations give, as it were, a pictorial record of the year in art.